

Dining Out

With half of the American food dollar being spent on away-from-home foods, we really need some strategies for maintaining healthy eating habits while eating out. Below are a few suggestions and strategies for combining good nutrition with dining out.

Choose Restaurants with Healthy Eating in Mind

- If the “All You Can Eat Buffet” is the main message on the restaurant sign... proceed cautiously.
- If time constraints dictate “Fast Food,” look for a restaurant that offers fruit/yogurt options instead of French fries or grilled chicken sandwiches vs. fried.
- Is nutrition information on the menu... if not ask for it. It is usually available somewhere in the restaurant.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand in your car so that you don’t have to make a hasty restaurant selection because you are STARVING! Dried fruit, nuts, and apples all keep well and pack a good nutritional punch.

Select Menu Items Carefully

- How a food is prepared can determine its nutritional value – choose steamed, grilled, poached, baked or roasted over fried.
- When ordering salads, ask for the dressing on the side – and opt for the “lite” dressing.
- Unless the restaurant has a famous appetizer, avoid filling up on pre-meal items. The meal alone is usually perfectly satisfying.
- Need dessert? Try a selection with fresh fruit and avoid the high-fat, high-sugar options.

Watch Your Portion Sizes!

Did you know that even the size of dinner plates in America have increased over the past 40 years in order to accommodate our expanding portion sizes? You can take back control! Many restaurants offer ½ portions. If this is not an option, ask for a to go box and save ½ of your meal to enjoy the next day.

How Easy is It to Find Locally Produced Foods While Eating Out?

- Dining on the local cuisine can be a true culinary delight. The food is fresh, the flavors alive and the preparation done by folks familiar with their local bounty.
- Today, many of the most popular fast-food restaurants offer milk from local dairies as an option with kid’s meals or a la carte. How do you find out if a restaurant offers local foods?